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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Wednesday - April 16, 1941

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "SPRING BLITZ ON DUST AND DIRT." Information from the Farm Security Administration. U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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A lot of people say spring housecleaning is old-fashioned and out-of-style, and they are largely right. The smart modern homemaker keeps her house clean all the time, and doesn't have to upset everything to get things in shape once or twice a year. Still, our living arrangements change enough from winter to summer that we must count on a little extra cleaning, and most of us like to do a thorough job while we're at it.

Today the Farm Security Administration reports on some suggestions of its home supervisors to borrower families on housecleaning - both the spring variety and the year-around type. On the spring variety, housewives are advised to wage a systematic, all-out campaign against dust and dirt. They are advised to take a room at a time and clean it thoroughly before going to the next. This way, the whole house isn't topsy-turvy and torn up at the same time.

It's also suggested they begin upstairs and work down..... and that they use simple equipment and make most of their own supplies to cut expense..... and that they draft boys and girls in the family to help out..... and that they don't try to do the whole house in one day and have to spend the rest of the year resting up...

Suppose we start with cleaning some dirty walls. A good way, of course, to clean dusty soiled walls is to wipe them down with a broom covered with a cloth bag - preferable a cotton flannel bag. Use light, even, overlapping strokes to remove the dirt instead of rub it in. If there are any fresh grease spots on the wallpaper, you can probably remove them with a piece of blotting paper and a warm iron. The iron should melt the grease and the blotting paper absorb it. Of course, there are

other ways to clean wallpaper, and if your walls are particularly soiled, you should talk to your home supervisor or home demonstration agent about them.

If any of your walls are painted or enameled, you can easily wash them. A good solution for washing is a gallon of warm water with a tablespoon of baking soda dissolved in it. If the water is hard, you can put in two or three tablespoons of soda. Or if the walls are very soiled, dissolve two tablespoons of mild soap powder in a quart of warm water and stir in a tablespoon of household ammonia. Apply this to the walls with a cloth or sponge and rinse off with clear water. Change the water as often as it gets dirty, or it won't clean. The reason you shouldn't use bar soap on most walls and woodwork is that it causes streaks and dulls the surface.

Now you probably have a very pet method for cleaning windows, but if you don't, you might like to try a soft lintless cloth, or chamois skin, dipped in some clear water with a bit of ammonia, washing soda, or kerosene in it. Put a teaspoon of washing soda to a gallon of warm water, or two teaspoons of kerosene to a gallon of water, or two teaspoons of ammonia to a quart of water. If the window is very dirty, don't wring the cloth or chamois out tightly, but go over the window once, then rinse it in water, wring the cloth, and go over it again. This will give you a clean polished window without the trouble of polishing it.

Some people clean a dirty window first with soft paper. Either tissue or newspaper will remove the film of dust or smoke, and also make a good polisher. Or you can wipe off the windows with a cloth treated with kerosene. The cloth should be soaked in kerosene for 24 hours and then let dry 24 hours. Of course, whatever cleans windows will also clean mirrors.

Then come window shades. The best way to clean window shades is to lay them flat on a smooth surface and wipe them on both sides with a damp cloth. If they are washable, wipe them off with a dry cloth and then scrub them with a brush and mild soap suds. Rinse off the suds with clean warm water, and wipe them with a clean

dry cloth. Wash first one side and then the other, and hang them up full length to dry before rolling.

When the shades are worn at the lower end and edges are ragged, it's an old household trick to take them off the roller and turn them end for end. Just stitch a hem wide enough to hold the stick, or put in a new hem with glue. Cut off the frayed end and tack the good part to the roller, and you have a greatly improved window shade.

Before washing curtains, be sure to shake all the dust out of the, and if they are very old or fragile, put them in a flour sack to wash. It's a good idea too, to soak them for awhile in water with kerosene in it - about a tablespoon to two quarts of cold water. After they are washed, you can wring them in a soft towel. Then dry them perhaps with a curtain rod through each hem to hold them in place and stretch them to their original length and shape.....

They say a room looks no cleaner than its floors, so let's get busy on the floors. If you have an oiled floor, sweep it and wipe it with a cloth wrung from warm soapy water, then dry it thoroughly with a clean oiled cloth or mop. To oil the floor, rub oil well into the wood and don't leave any surplus oil on the surface to collect dust.

If you have a painted floor, clean it with soap and water and when it is dry, use a slightly oiled mop to bring back the luster to the paint. Or if you have a waxed floor, dust or mop it with a soft duster, floor brush, or mop free from oil. Oil will soften the wax and ruin the surface of the floor. You can clean a varnished floor as you would clean any other wood surface or furniture. And while you're about it, why don't you give your linoleum floors a new lease on life? Just wash them, and put on a new coat of shellac, or wax them.

You can make your own furniture polish too, if you like. Mix a cup of turpentine with a cup of boiled linseed oil and add a tablespoon of vinegar. Apply it with a soft cloth and wipe off the excess with a clean cloth. Polish by rubbing until the wood is dry and your fingers don't leave a mark.....

Well, this doesn't nearly cover the housecleaning job, does it? There are mattresses to air and beat, bedsprings to wash, bedding to launder, stoves to scour, closets to clean, and and so much more! But the Farm Security Administration hopes these few suggestions of its home supervisors to borrower families may prove economies and time savers to you.

